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USDA/CSREES LISTENING SESSION

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10 Establishment of the Hispanic-Serving Agricultural  
11 Colleges and Universities

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20 Sunday  
October 12, 2008  
21 Hyatt Regency Denver  
Denver, Colorado  
22 3:06 PM  
Before  
23 Martha Loomis,  
Certified Shorthand Reporter  
24 and Colorado Notary Public  
Interpreter: Pame Bradford  
25 Colorado Interpreter

1 USDA Representatives:

2

3 PS Benepal  
Erin Daly  
Irma Lawrence

4	John Miklozek Ralph Otto James Spurling Interpreter: Pame Bradford Colorado Interpreter	
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#### Li steni ng Sessi on

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1 WHEREUPON the fol lowi ng proceedi ngs were  
2 taken:  
3 DR. OTTO: I want to wel come you all to  
4 thi s USDA Li steni ng Sessi on. I want to thank you  
5 all for findi ng the time to be wi th us. Thi s i s  
6 an i mportant Li steni ng Sessi on for us as we try to  
7 understand the i mpli cati ons and i nterpretati ons of  
8 the new Farm Bi ll wi th reference to programs that  
9 affect the Hi spani c-Servi ng Insti tuti on Communi ty.  
10 I am Ralph Otto, the Associ ate  
11 Admini strator for CSREES, the Cooperati ve State  
12 Research Educati on and Extensi on Servi ce. Al so  
13 here today from the USDA are James Spurl i ng, our

14 Assistant Administrator for Public Relations and  
15 Liaison, Ms. Erin Daly, a Branch Chief of  
16 Oversight and Policy with our Office of Extramural  
17 Policy, Dr. PS Benepal, Director of Multicultural  
18 Programs, Dr. Irma Lawrence, National Program  
19 Leader for Hispanic-Serving Institutions and  
20 Educational Grant Programs, John Miklozek, who  
21 assists and is an associate to Dr. Lawrence.

22 Sitting up front we have a USDA emeritus,  
23 Undersecretary Emeritus, Dr. Miley Gonzales, who  
24 is currently Secretary of Agriculture for the  
25 state of New Mexico.

#### Listening Session

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1 By way of background in 1998 Congress  
2 passed the Agricultural Research, Education, and  
3 Extension Reform Act. That legislation mandates  
4 the Secretary of Agriculture to solicit input from  
5 those who conduct education, extension, and  
6 research programs, and those who use the outputs  
7 from those programs.

8 My agency, CSREES, takes this very  
9 seriously. We utilize the input. It's one of the  
10 things that helps keep our programs current and  
11 effective.

12 On September 10 we held a Listening  
13 Session for new agriculture and research  
14 initiative. On September 15 we held a Listening  
15 Session for the Veterinary Medicine and Loan  
16 Repayment Program otherwise known as the National  
17 Medical Services Act.

18 On October 6, just last week, we held a

19 Listening Session on Integrated Pest Management  
20 and how it intersects with our Extension 3-D  
21 programs.

22 Today we're talking about provisions in  
23 the new Farm Bill that will affect the HSI  
24 community. On October 27 we will hold a Listening  
25 Session back in Washington on beginning ranches

Listening Session

6

1 and farms community program under the Farm Bill.  
2 And we hold Listening Sessions throughout the  
3 year.

4 The Food Conservation and Energy Act of  
5 2008, otherwise known as the Farm Bill, created a  
6 new set of programs dedicated to the HSI  
7 community. We have distributed some background  
8 information and a copy of the pertinent portion of  
9 the legislation that describes these programs.  
10 You'll find them setting on the seats there.

11 Although we positively solicit and  
12 welcome commentary on any part of these programs  
13 or any part of the Farm Bill in general for that  
14 matter we are especially interested in hearing  
15 your thoughts on how to interpret and implement  
16 the definition of the new category of institution  
17 established by the Farm Bill.

18 This category encompasses  
19 Hispanic-Serving Agriculture Colleges and  
20 Universities as presented in the Farm Bill, the  
21 term Hispanic-Serving Agriculture Colleges and  
22 Universities, HSACUs as I say it.

23 These are universities that qualify as

24 Hi spani c-Servi ng insti tutes as defi ned i n the  
25 Hi gher Educati on Act of 1965, and offer Associ ate,  
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1 Bachel or, or other accredi ted degree programs i n  
2 agri cul tural -rel ated fi el ds. It i s that l ast  
3 term, "agri cul tural -rel ated fi el ds," that' s gi vi ng  
4 us a chal l enge.

5 I want you to be aware that we' re very  
6 seri ous when we say we put emphasi s and we take  
7 very seri ously the val ue of stakeholder, customer,  
8 partner, and benefi ci ary i nput. It' s been our  
9 experi ence that the ci ti zens we serve consi stently  
10 provide i deas that tend to make our programs  
11 better.

12 We conti nuously sol i ci t i nput. When the  
13 RFAs for these programs come out you' ll fi nd  
14 attache d to every RFA we publi sh a si mi lar request  
15 for i nput.

16 You' ll noti ce today I' ve descri bed the  
17 sessi on not so much as a stakeholder s i nput  
18 sessi on but rather as a Li steni ng Sessi on. We are  
19 real ly here to li sten. I encourage you to provide  
20 your good i deas on any aspect of these programs.

21 If you are not speaki ng today we  
22 encourage you to submit writ ten commentary. You  
23 woul d need to get thi s i n by October 27, two weeks  
24 from tomorrow. You can send i t by e-mai l to John  
25 Mi k l o z e k. And he' ll gi ve you the i nformati on.

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1 He' s the young man standi ng at the back checki ng  
2 you i n.

3           While I have his attention, John, do we  
4 have the list of speakers up here?

5           MR. MIKLOZEK: Yes.

6           MR. OTTO: Good. Thank you.

7           The results of this Listening Session  
8 will be posted on our website fairly soon. But in  
9 practical terms the results are going to be used  
10 by us to help formulate the rules and regulations  
11 under which we'll operate these programs.

12           But keep in mind this afternoon's session  
13 is not the endpoint; we are just starting. We are  
14 soliciting information that will help us to  
15 establish proposed rules and regulations. Before  
16 they become final this will be published  
17 publicly and you will be asked to comment on  
18 them again so it's an ongoing process here.

19           Once again these programs are very very  
20 important to us. I cannot think of anyone that  
21 would provide better input and assistance to us  
22 than the audience we have here.

23           I would like to ask Mr. Spurling, our  
24 Assistant Administrator, to give just a few  
25 background ground rules on how we'll conduct this

Listening Session

9

1 session today.

2           Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much  
3 for being here.

4           (Applause.)

5           MR. SPURLING: If at all possible if you  
6 have written comments if you could leave them with  
7 the reporter it helps the reporter. Although she

8 will be transcribing everything you say it does  
9 help to sometimes pick up every meaning that you  
10 may have if you can leave written comments with  
11 her as she puts together the transcript.

12 I unfortunately also have the job of  
13 timing you today. And we are going to hopefully  
14 maintain comments to approximately five minutes.  
15 If we have time at the end and you didn't finish  
16 what you wanted to say we will consider at that  
17 point in time allowing additional comments as long  
18 as everyone has had an opportunity to say what  
19 they wish.

20 Other than that the forum is yours. And  
21 we have a list of some that previously had signed  
22 up and some that just signed up coming into the  
23 room.

24 And Dr. Jose Vecente from Miami-Dade  
25 College is our first speaker today.

Listening Session

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1 DR. VECENTE: Good afternoon. And let me  
2 preface my remark by felicitating USDA because I  
3 think that what we're having here today is truly  
4 an historic moment given the initiative that has  
5 been undertaken. So certainly on behalf of  
6 Miami-Dade College and certainly the HSIs and all  
7 present I'd like to congratulate you.

8 I'd also like to talk to you a little bit  
9 about our institution to give you an idea in terms  
10 of how we envision the possibility of connecting  
11 in this particular initiative.

12 The creation of Hispanic-Serving  
Page 8



13 Agriculture Colleges and Universities is essential  
14 as we increase and diversify the workforce in  
15 agricultural-related fields.

16 I'm here today representing Miami-Dade  
17 College, which actually opened its doors back in  
18 1960. In 2003 the college was accepted to be  
19 named Miami-Dade College after being approved to  
20 offer Baccalaureate degree programs in education  
21 with specialization in the natural sciences. It  
22 is the only public two-year community college for  
23 the almost two and a half million residents of  
24 Miami-Dade County in Florida.

25 Miami-Dade College is comprised of eight

Listening Session

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1 geographically located campuses serving the  
2 2,000 square miles of our county. Combined  
3 enrollment is 60,000 students annually and it  
4 involves the highest number of Hispanic students  
5 in the country.

6 Miami is America's poorest big city  
7 according to the 2000 census with a greater  
8 percentage of residents living in poverty than any  
9 US city with a population in excess of  
10 250,000 people.

11 Miami-Dade College programs of studies  
12 include more than 80 Associate of Arts degrees,  
13 Associate of Science degrees in 85 areas, eight  
14 Associate of Applied Science, 38 vocational credit  
15 certificate programs, and also accredited to offer  
16 Baccalaureate degree programs in education, public  
17 safety management, and nursing.

18           The college currently offers academic  
19 programs supporting each and every one of the  
20 careers within the US Department of Agriculture  
21 agency within the areas of management,  
22 agribusiness and industry, and science and  
23 technology.

24           Some of these programs include  
25 accounting, criminal justice, computer science,

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1 agriculture business, economics, food program  
2 management, animal sciences, archeology,  
3 biological sciences, chemistry, engineering, food  
4 inspection, geology, hydrology, nutrition,  
5 agriscience, veterinary medicine, biotechnology,  
6 and bioinformatics to name a few.

7           The college enjoys professional  
8 relationships with USDA research services, local  
9 botanical gardens and nurseries, and with a  
10 multitude of research universities both in Florida  
11 and within the rest of the nation.

12           Alternatives to core sources have been  
13 developed by the college through grant  
14 partnerships such as NOAA, supporting coastal  
15 ecology and atmospheric sciences, Department of  
16 Education, Title 5 retooling sciences, and this  
17 grant is a five-year grant supporting lab  
18 instrumentation, library resources, and math as  
19 well as faculty development and outreaching to  
20 underserved youth encouraging exploration of  
21 science intensive academic and career paths.

22           Project Agricultural Career Exploration

23 supported by USDA is a program that supports  
24 creating opportunities to enter new educational  
25 pathways in the field of agribusiness by way of a

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1 certificate program in commercial nursery growing  
2 operations implementing a living laboratory  
3 facility designated the Center for Urban  
4 Agriculture with a greenhouse, a palm arboretum,  
5 and recruitment of Hispanic high school and  
6 college students into these fields.

7 Project Fuentes is a cooperative grant  
8 through DOE between Miami-Dade College and the  
9 University of Puerto Rico to develop a two plus  
10 two environmental science program.

11 Miami-Dade College is about to complete  
12 construction of a \$40 million science complex  
13 facility with 21 science laboratories, lecture  
14 halls, and a rooftop atmospheric science facility.

15 It is important to note that while  
16 community colleges are well-known for their  
17 teaching, and universities for their research,  
18 this particular science facility has been built  
19 with the capacity to conduct any type of research  
20 within the 21 science labs that I just alluded to.

21 Its science complex will include a  
22 four-acre palmarium with palm species from all of  
23 the places around the world for research purposes,  
24 a one acre botanical garden, two greenhouses and  
25 shade house, and we also have a three and a half

Listening Session

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1 acre water lake and an urban green space.

2           The five HSACU programs will greatly

3 benefit Miami-Dade College by supporting related

4 academic programs such as the ones I just

5 mentioned, scholarships for students entering

6 these fields of studies, equity programs

7 supporting diversity, internship programs, and at

8 present capacity building within our institution

9 as well as research through the endowment funds,

10 equity grant programs, institutional capacity

11 building grant programs, extension grant programs

12 as well as the fundamental and applied research

13 grant program.

14           Miami-Dade College has all of the

15 attributes to be considered as we develop

16 regulations for identifying and certifying

17 institutions, that is Hispanic-Serving

18 Agricultural Colleges and Universities.

19           In summary, HSIs such as Miami-Dade

20 College offer Associate degrees and/or

21 Baccalaureate degrees in academic and applied

22 programs in field of studies leading to the

23 development of highly qualified potential

24 employees for all of those areas of endeavor.

25           The fields of studies include

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1 agriculture, plant sciences, animal sciences,

2 agribusiness, ag-economics, genetics, sociology,

3 nutritional sciences, and a multitude of others.

4           HSIs provide outstanding levels of

5 diversity for the workforce. Partnering with USDA

6 CSREES, HSI s provide a great deal of original  
 7 research and program development which affect all  
 8 aspects of CSREES' operational initiatives  
 9 relative to education, research, conservation, and  
 10 others.

11 Some HSI s have Land Grant status. Those  
 12 are cared for to a great extent by the Farm Bill ;  
 13 however, most HSI s do not have land grant status,  
 14 hence only receive peripheral benefits from the  
 15 Farm Bill .

16 HSI s, having direct and influential  
 17 contact with a diverse population of students,  
 18 have spheres of influence in assisting those  
 19 students with career programs of study options.  
 20 It is this influence that can affect the positive  
 21 preparation of the agri sciences-related workforce  
 22 of the future.

23 Thank you.

24 (Appl ause. )

25 MR. SPURLING: Another bad part of my job

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1 is pronounci ng names. If I really mess this up  
 2 please excuse me.

3 Dr. Mahadev Bhat from Florida  
 4 Internati onal Uni versi ty.

5 DR. BHAT: Good afternoon, everybody. My  
 6 name is Dr. Mahadev Bhat. I am from the Florida  
 7 Internati onal Uni versi ty, Mi ami .

8 I'm really honored to go right after  
 9 Dr. Vecent who is also from Mi ami , our sister  
 10 college.

11 I am here today on behalf of Dr. Andres  
12 Gil, the Associate Vice President for Research of  
13 our University, and I am delighted to present our  
14 views on the USDA's proposed initiative for  
15 creating the Hispanic-Serving Agricultural  
16 Colleges and Universities.

17 It is an exciting opportunity for  
18 Hispanic students, parents, farmers, and business  
19 communities alike. There is no doubt in my mind  
20 that this new initiative will give USDA and  
21 universities and colleges across the country an  
22 increased capability to contribute toward the  
23 USDA's core mission of food and agriculture  
24 education, research, and extension.

25 We understand that with the increasing

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1 number of Hispanic-Serving Colleges and  
2 Universities and all the resource constraints you  
3 might face you have a daunting task of identifying  
4 appropriate agriculture colleges. We would like  
5 to suggest the following criteria for designating  
6 Hispanic-Serving Colleges and Universities. They  
7 are not in any particular order of priority.

8 One: Size of a college/university, in  
9 terms of number of degrees given to Hispanic  
10 students.

11 Two: Types of degrees offered in terms  
12 of providing minor degrees, Bachelor, Master, and  
13 Doctoral programs, and thus training Hispanic  
14 students across the spectrum.

15 Three: Infrastructure in terms of the

16 level of sponsored research in existence and the  
17 systems to support research, student training and  
18 outreach.

19 Four: Locational advantage in terms of  
20 the opportunity an HS university has in addressing  
21 unique agricultural, food, fuel, and natural  
22 resources issues through research and outreach.

23 Five: Complementarity new HS  
24 agricultural colleges, but not in competition  
25 with, existing Land Grant universities.

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1 Six: Pipeline in terms of providing  
2 college educations to Hispanic agricultural  
3 science students coming out of feeder high schools  
4 and middle schools.

5 Seven: Existing agricultural science  
6 programs in the areas of teaching, student  
7 professional development, research, and outreach.

8 Eight: Ongoing partnership with USDA in  
9 terms of past and current funded projects carried  
10 out to promote the USDA missions.

11 I am sure there are other criteria that  
12 will be of relevance to this new program which  
13 will come out of this public hearing process.

14 Why should FIU be an HSACU? The  
15 students, faculty, and the community served by the  
16 Florida International University are extremely  
17 pleased to be part of this exciting initiative. I  
18 am proud to present a few of our accomplishments  
19 and capabilities in providing the best possible  
20 agricultural education and scientific support to

21 agriculture-interest groups in general and the  
22 Hispanic community in particular.  
23 One: FIU is one of the largest  
24 Hispanic-Serving universities in the country with  
25 more than 38,000 students, 55 percent of whom are

Listening Session

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1 Hispanic.  
2 Two: FIU offers graduate and  
3 undergraduate certificates, Bachelor's, Masters,  
4 and Doctoral degrees in several  
5 agriculture-related fields: Environmental  
6 Studies, Biological Sciences, Dietetics and  
7 Nutrition, International Relations, Economics,  
8 Political Sciences, Geography, and Business and  
9 Accounting. More than 10,000 students are in the  
10 above programs.  
11 Three: Since 2005 FIU has received five  
12 major grants from the USDA Science and Education  
13 Resources Development Program, including two  
14 Hispanic-Serving Institutions Higher Education  
15 Grants, in support of its comprehensive  
16 Agri-ecology Program that aims to recruit Hispanic  
17 and underrepresented minority students into  
18 agricultural science programs.  
19 Four: The FIU agri-ecology has developed  
20 an institutional alliance with the local USDA  
21 Agricultural Research Service station, high  
22 schools, Miami-Dade College, another large HSI,  
23 local nongovernmental agriculture research  
24 organizations, and several organic farms. The  
25 program reaches out to area high schools, and



1 trains their students and teachers in agri-ecology  
2 in order to create a pipeline for future  
3 recruitment of minority students into higher  
4 agri science related educati ons.

5           Five: The FIU faculty members have been  
6 collaborating with the USDA Agricultural Research  
7 Service's Horticultural Research station in Miami  
8 and National Resources Conservation Service for  
9 more than ten years on research projects that  
10 address agricultural and natural resources  
11 problems.

12           Six: FIU has several past and ongoing  
13 federal, state, and privately-funded research  
14 projects on issues ranging from agri-ecology, food  
15 nutrition, international agricultural trade in  
16 Latin America to integrated water resources  
17 management and biofuel conversion technology.

18           Seven: Hispanic students graduating from  
19 FIU Environmental Studies, Dietetics and  
20 Nutrition, and Biological Sciences have joined  
21 USDA, ARS, NRCS, and other agencies.

22           Eight: Hispanic and other minority  
23 students graduating from FIU have joined graduate  
24 programs in some of the nation's prestigious  
25 agriculture and forestry institutes.

1           Nine: FIU Agri-ecology Program has been  
2 sought by local agricultural leaders and farmers  
3 to provide training, research, and leadership for  
4 developing new initiatives for urban community

5 gardens and organic gardens.

6           Ten: FIU faculty members serve on the  
7 Date County Public Schools Agriculture and Related  
8 Science Committee. We conduct routine visits to  
9 high schools to recruit minority students into  
10 agriculture and related sciences at FIU. We also  
11 conduct annual agri-ecology research symposia and  
12 teaching workshops.

13           Eleven: FIU faculty members routinely  
14 serve on the editorial boards of national and  
15 international agricultural and environmental  
16 science journals and the USDA grant research  
17 panels.

18           Twelve: Overall, FIU is well placed to  
19 further advance its research, education, and  
20 training in agriculture-related fields to provide  
21 quality training for students in general and the  
22 Hispanic community in particular. Also, the  
23 university has faculty expertise, infrastructure,  
24 and unique locational advantage for providing  
25 innovative solutions in areas such as tropical

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1 organic agriculture, urban agriculture, biofuel,  
2 nutrition and health, and international trade and  
3 policy.

4           We look forward to working with the USDA  
5 and other HSIs in the country on this new mission  
6 toward expanding the nation's capability in  
7 providing agricultural education and research.

8           Thank you very much. We will submit a  
9 revised and expanded version of this testimony

10 electronically before the deadline.

11 Thank you for this opportunity.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. SPURLING: Thank you.

14 Next up is Reverend Monsignor Franklyn  
15 Casale, St. Thomas University Florida.

16 REV. MONSIGNOR CASALE: Also in Miami.

17 Thank you very much for this opportunity  
18 to present.

19 On September 22nd of this year St. Thomas  
20 University in Miami dedicated and inaugurated our  
21 new Carnival Cruise Line Science and Technology  
22 Building. That \$17 million facility is totally  
23 dedicated to our undergraduate program in science.

24 This research facility services our  
25 students in science, technology, engineering, and

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1 mathematics. The new 26,000-square-foot facility  
2 has 14 research laboratories, eight teaching  
3 laboratories, and several special-purpose rooms.

4 Our facility includes a large  
5 environmental chamber which can simulate cold  
6 conditions to desert environments to tropical  
7 conditions for a variety of experimental reasons.

8 Our research facility also includes an  
9 environmental laboratory currently dedicated to  
10 the study of the interactions of Florida native  
11 and endangered plants and their environment.

12 It is equipped with a controlled  
13 environmental incubator, a laminar flow bench, an  
14 autoclave, a PH meter, analytical balance, and on

15 and on and on, all state of the art equipment.

16 Our research faculty includes a plant  
17 biologist with three-year post doctoral experience  
18 in environmental stress research acquired at the  
19 USDA, and a neuroscientist who has received over  
20 \$1.5 million in NIH and DOE grants for research  
21 into spinal cord injury.

22 St. Thomas University offers a Bachelor's  
23 degree in biology with a specialization in  
24 biological research. We conduct fundamental and  
25 applied research in agricultural crops and

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1 environmental science.

2 Interest areas of research among our  
3 Hispanic students include environmental stress in  
4 plants, organic agriculture, plant microbe  
5 interaction, genetic analysis, and native plant  
6 populations among others. We have ongoing  
7 collaborations with neighboring universities and  
8 colleges.

9 The reason I give you all this background  
10 is with the request that you certainly include  
11 institutions such as St. Thomas University in the  
12 definition of institutions that offer Associate,  
13 Baccalaureate, or other accredited degree programs  
14 in agriculture related fields.

15 At the moment, as I said before, our  
16 programs are encompassed simply by the degree in  
17 biology, mathematics, or engineering; however, by  
18 this testimony I hope that you will expand that  
19 definition to be liberal in the interpretation of

20 those institutions that you accept into the  
21 program.

22 With new funding from the Department of  
23 Agriculture we will be allowed to expand our  
24 offerings, for example to offer an agricultural -  
25 engineering technology degree as well as a major

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1 in plant biology. With additional funding we  
2 could expand our research activities to support  
3 the South Florida Everglades Restoration Project  
4 by reintroducing native plant species.

5 Like most HSIs we leverage every single  
6 dollar that we get. We never waste a penny.

7 The University continues to receive  
8 funding at this very moment from the Department of  
9 Energy, the Department of Defense, NASA, and the  
10 NIH for research, a total of \$16.2 million over  
11 the last eight years. This money has been matched  
12 by the private sector in a similar amount through  
13 a capital campaign.

14 Again I ask you to please include our  
15 type of institution in the programs of the  
16 Department of Agriculture.

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. SPURLING: Thank you.

20 Next up we have Jose Magdaleno from  
21 Lehman College in New York.

22 MR. MAGDALENO: Good afternoon, and  
23 welcome colleagues. I want to thank the USDA for  
24 hosting this Listening Session. I'm very pleased

25 to represent the Lehman College community and our  
Listening Session

26

1 president Dr. Ricardo R. Fernandez at this  
2 Listening Session.

3 The College is pleased to respond to the  
4 request for input on how to identify and certify  
5 an institution as an Hispanic-Serving Agriculture  
6 College or University, and is particularly pleased  
7 to learn that Section 7129 of the Food  
8 Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 will make  
9 available funding for an endowment fund, an equity  
10 grants program, an institutional capacity grants  
11 program, and a fundamental and implied research  
12 grants program.

13 We recommend that all Hispanic-Serving  
14 institutions with research and academic programs  
15 in food science, nutrition, and agricultural and  
16 plant sciences, be eligible to apply for this  
17 designation.

18 While Lehman agrees that all of these  
19 programs are valuable we especially want to  
20 highlight the need for the endowment fund and the  
21 research grants program. The endowment fund will  
22 make available scholarship funds for graduate and  
23 undergraduate students at Hispanic-Serving  
24 Agricultural Institutions for pursuing degrees in related  
25 programs. Such support will enhance the pipeline

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1 of Hispanic students at all levels in those  
2 fields.

3 Similarly monies made available through  
4 the fundamental and applied research grants  
5 program can be used to support joint research  
6 programs and partnerships between Hispanic-Serving  
7 Institutions and non HIS research rich  
8 institutions. In the case of Lehman College one  
9 of those examples would be the New York Botanical  
10 Garden.

11 Lehman College of the City University of  
12 New York is a designated Hispanic-Serving  
13 Institution with outstanding academic programs and  
14 affordable tuition, and the primary avenue to  
15 higher education for low income and minority  
16 residents of Bronx County and the City of New  
17 York.

18 Lehman is exceptional among the CUNY  
19 institutions for its undergraduate and graduate  
20 degree programs in food science, nutrition, and  
21 plant biology. The CUNY Ph.D. program in plant  
22 sciences is based at the college and offered in  
23 partnership with the New York Botanical Garden.

24 Additionally Lehman faculty host and  
25 mentor post doctoral scholars from all over the

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1 world who come to Lehman to conduct research in  
2 our plant science laboratories.

3 A four-year urban commuter college Lehman  
4 has its own field space on campus, which makes it  
5 unique among both inner city minority-serving  
6 institutions and agriculture colleges and  
7 universities.

8 By permitting Lehman to compete for  
9 additional federal funding HSACU status will  
10 support new research and student support at the  
11 college, thereby improving its standing as a  
12 regional center for advanced research and  
13 education of the food, agricultural, and plant  
14 sciences.

15 Lehman's faculty, post doctoral fellows,  
16 and students are recognized for their achievement  
17 in ecological, biomedical, genetic, and  
18 nutritional research. For over 20 years the plant  
19 science faculty consistently has won federal and  
20 foundation support for its cutting-edge work.

21 Funders include the National Science  
22 Foundation, USDA, the Rockefeller Foundation, and  
23 the National Institute of Health. In the last  
24 five years alone funding awarded for research and  
25 plant biology and crop science exceeded

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1 \$8 million.

2 Ongoing agricultural and plant science  
3 research includes the study of antioxidants and  
4 anticarcinogenic compound production and their  
5 biological roles in aging, disease immunity and  
6 stress response, nutritional enhancement of food  
7 crops, most notably increasing the vitamin A  
8 content in corn, genetic and biochemical processes  
9 used by crop plants to respond to stressors in  
10 their environments, and the role of plants in  
11 regulating carbon and greenhouse gasses.

12 The faculty routinely publishes its



13 findings in top scientific journals such as  
14 science and field specific publications including  
15 Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology, the  
16 Journal of Ecology, Plant Physiology, the Journal  
17 of Experimental Botany, Piezochemistry,  
18 Piezomedicine, the Journal of Agriculture and Food  
19 Chemistry, Plant Cell and Environmental Plant  
20 Physiology, and Food Science among others.

21           Lehman College has just broken ground on  
22 a \$250 million, three phase science facility. The  
23 Lehman College science facility is designed to  
24 encourage both interdisciplinary and specialized  
25 scientific inquiry that will include modular

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1 laboratories for instruction and research,  
2 classroom, state of the art instrumentation, an  
3 advanced research and teaching greenhouse, and  
4 additional growing space for faculty and graduate  
5 research.

6           The facility will obviously expand  
7 significantly the college's research and teaching  
8 capacity in plant and agriculture science.

9           Lehman College has long had an  
10 institutional commitment to food, agricultural and  
11 nutritional sciences as its academic programs and  
12 strong record in research demonstrates.

13           Lehman plans to extend its contribution  
14 in this area through the creation of a plant  
15 science center that will serve as a nucleus for  
16 some of the activities of an Hispanic-Serving  
17 Agricultural College in the Bronx.

18 Thank you very much.  
19 (Applause.)  
20 MR. SPURLING: Thank you.  
21 Next up is Dr. Nora Garza.  
22 Dr. Garza, you want to do both at once?  
23 DR. GARZA: I'll do both at once.  
24 MR. SPURLING: Okay. She's representing  
25 Laredo Community College in Texas, and the Texas

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1 Hispanic-Serving Institutions Consortium.  
2 DR. GARZA: Good afternoon. My name is  
3 Nora Garza. I serve as vice president for  
4 research development for the Laredo Community  
5 College.  
6 First of all I would like to thank you  
7 for the opportunity to share information about our  
8 college, and thank you for setting up the  
9 stakeholders meeting where many of us have come to  
10 learn about best practices.  
11 Let me tell you a little bit about Laredo  
12 Community College. Laredo Community College was  
13 founded in 1947. It has a 60-year plus history of  
14 serving the border community. We are a border  
15 community with Mexico. Our city was founded in  
16 1755 and our neighboring town was founded after  
17 the state of Texas became the state of Texas and  
18 the people didn't want to be a part of the United  
19 States so they founded Nuevo Laredo. This is a  
20 way of telling you where I'm coming from.  
21 In 1755 this town was founded. And it  
22 was primarily a farming and ranching community.

23 That's where the roots of Laredo are.

24 Laredo Community College serves over

25 96 percent Hispanic students. The town of Laredo

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1 or the City of Laredo shall I say is about

2 99 percent Hispanic.

3 Earlier they had mentioned poverty rates.

4 We won't go into that. There's a lot of wealth

5 and there's a lot of poverty.

6 On the border with Mexico -- oh, I guess

7 something to what the Father said earlier, we have

8 many many degree programs that are not specified

9 as such so the students begin their two-year

10 careers -- and some of them are short two-year

11 careers. The others transfer to other, to

12 universities to complete their studies so they

13 don't per se get a degree in agribusiness or

14 veterinary medicine; they transfer to the

15 1862 and into other universities to complete those

16 career fields.

17 But from what I have learned as a USDA

18 fellow there's work at USDA in many many fields.

19 So in selecting I would encourage you to think out

20 of the box and think of capacity building when you

21 consider designations, for example where we would

22 be if in 1862 they would not have created the

23 A&Ms. They didn't start having all the research

24 capabilities; they had to start somewhere.

25 So I would encourage you and ask that you

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1 consider the nontraditional agriculture colleges

2 if you will as you make your designation.

3           When I mentioned that Laredo was founded  
4 primarily as a farming and ranching community it  
5 was not a fort, it was a ranching community. And  
6 as such I think any of you that are here from  
7 Texas you know that Laredo, there was a big town  
8 150 miles away in all directions. So San Antonio  
9 is 150 miles away. So Brownsville is over  
10 150 miles away. So Monterey is over 150 miles  
11 away. You can think of that as the opportunity  
12 for education.

13           So when Laredo Community College started  
14 it was a way of providing education to those  
15 underserved communities, to those underserved  
16 students.

17           Nonetheless Laredo Community College has  
18 an environmental science center that studies the  
19 flora and fauna of the Rio Grande watershed which  
20 begins in southern Colorado and goes all the way  
21 to the mouth of the Rio Grande. Sometimes. When  
22 it's not dry, okay?

23           So that environmental science center was  
24 created due to monies that were put up by the  
25 people of Laredo, farmers and ranchers, the

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1 (untranslated) Estates that gave some money. It  
2 is on the site of a -- I don't know if it was USDA  
3 but it was an Israeli farm project where they  
4 first started drip irrigation. And also we have  
5 three or four wind turbines first generation.

6           So there's a lot of potential there.

7 But if you were to ask us if we offer so many  
8 degrees we do not. So I would urge you to  
9 consider that when you decide which colleges or  
10 universities will be designated.

11 I would like to say historically  
12 Hispanic-Serving Laredo Community College is one  
13 that is historically Hispanic-Serving and I ask  
14 that you think of that because the sections that  
15 will help us the most are the capacity building,  
16 the endowment, which is very very crucial in  
17 providing scholarships, and any other things that  
18 will help us.

19 Our farmers and our ranchers met recently  
20 less than a month ago with our congressman. And  
21 they wanted to, they were being informed about the  
22 changes in the Farm Bill, et cetera. And they  
23 came to Laredo Community College and they asked us  
24 to set up a wildlife management degree. We would  
25 like to do that or ecotourism because now the

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1 farmers and ranchers and stuff also do tourism,  
2 ecotourism, which is very valuable.

3 But Laredo Community College does not  
4 have the resources to begin many of those programs  
5 without that funding. So funding by USDA as a  
6 historic Hispanic-Serving would be very very  
7 valuable to us.

8 We also have, as a result of my  
9 experiences as a USDA fellow, we have since then  
10 written and been awarded 30 USDA grants which are  
11 for a consortium, which are to team up with a

12 university and another community college in  
13 teleconferencing a course.

14           We had six students that traveled with me  
15 to Texas State University in San Marcos this past  
16 week. They went and they met with a teacher and  
17 with other students. Again when you talk about  
18 capacity building and reaching down into the  
19 students that are coming up, you know, it was  
20 amazing to see that these six students, who are  
21 very very intelligent, participated in FFA and  
22 were in different high schools. Yet when they  
23 went and they saw what the high school students  
24 were doing in and around San Marcos, Texas, it was  
25 quite different.

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1           So capacity building and endowment will  
2 be some of the very important things that would  
3 help. So I would urge you as you make your  
4 decision that you think very carefully about it.  
5 Not to take anything away from those that have  
6 been doing incredible research and need that kind  
7 of support; we urge you to think of them as well.  
8 But please think out of the box and include us as  
9 well.

10           Thank you.

11           (Applause.)

12           MR. SPURLING: Next up is Dr. Antonio  
13 Flores.

14           DR. GARZA: Can I please say something  
15 about the Consortium?

16           MR. SPURLING: Go ahead.  
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17 DR. GARZA: They are kind of different.

18 Ms. Lisa Perio is making a presentation  
19 and she is on the executive board of the Texas  
20 Hispanic-Serving Institution Consortium.

21 Laredo Community College and Houston  
22 Community College got a USDA grant three years ago  
23 to organize a Consortium of Hispanic-Serving  
24 Institutions on capacity building so that we could  
25 work on each other's strengths, help each other

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1 with our weaknesses, develop new ways of getting  
2 our students the education that they deserve.

3 Our president is Charlie Bycak from  
4 St. Edwards University, who is not with us today,  
5 and B. DeNorvo from Houston Community College, who  
6 is not here, and Lisa Perio, and I am the founding  
7 and former president of the Consortium.

8 If there's any way our Consortium can  
9 work with the USDA especially working with the  
10 Texas community colleges and universities there  
11 are 40 out of the 60 -- well, there are  
12 40 Hispanic-Serving Institutions in Texas and  
13 21 of them are members of our Consortium.

14 If there's any way that our Consortium  
15 can work to either get the word out to make  
16 opportunities for students available so that  
17 students can be aware of these opportunities we  
18 would love to be able to work with you, any way in  
19 the regulations or in the policies or in the  
20 procedures we would love to be able to do that, as  
21 I'm sure the other consortia and I think there are

22 at least two in California would like that  
23 opportunity.

24 Thank you very much.

25 (Applause.)

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1 MR. SPURLING: Dr. Antonio Flores?

2 THE FLOOR: Dr. Flores is delayed.

3 MR. SPURLING: That's fine. We'll move  
4 him till later and take him as soon as he arrives.

5 Dr. Frank Reyes?

6 DR. REYES: I want to take just a couple  
7 of minutes.

8 We actually have our chancellor and our  
9 two presidents from the Hispanic-Serving  
10 Institutions. I would like to defer to them if  
11 they wish to make a statement. If they are not  
12 prepared that's fine because we got this  
13 information at the last minute, but we are very  
14 very interested in trying to find out what we can  
15 do to make sure we fit in this policy very very  
16 well.

17 Now, we have been -- and I can speak in  
18 terms of the fact that I've been a fellow for the  
19 USDA in regards to the great benefits that we get  
20 for student internships and so forth. And it's  
21 been extremely extremely successful. We have  
22 learned a lot. So when this opportunity came up I  
23 asked my chancellor and two presidents to look at  
24 it.

25 They were actually very busy during the



1 week. They were being accredited so their focus was on accreditation, but you can bet they will submit their recommendations to become part of this because we also take this very seriously.

5 Just to show you, in one of our colleges we do have one of the best programs when it comes to culinary and restaurant management. And the other college has one of the best first responders when it comes to fire training in terms of that.

10 So I'm sure that our two presidents will be more than happy to make a written statement in terms of the great benefits that this will bring.

13 Plus to add something to it is that our Congressman Joe Bacca has been very instrumental in making sure that the Farm Bill is looked at very very carefully and that all HSI's with the potential of being agricultural do get looked at.

18 Furthermore we have a history. Congressman George Brown, who used to be Mr. Agriculture, was also very instrumental and very dedicated making sure colleges throughout the nation, specifically Hispanic-Serving Institutions, get the opportunity to have an input that would benefit tremendously.

25 We do have programs, as I stated already,

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1 that will benefit tremendously for agricultural colleges and universities.

3 Thank you so much.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. SPURLING: Dr. Les Young from Cal  
6 Poly.

7 DR. YOUNG: Good afternoon, everyone. My  
8 name is Les Young. I'm the current Dean of the  
9 College of Agriculture at Cal Poly Pomona, Cal  
10 Poly.

11 I represent a college that's very  
12 comprehensive within a university of  
13 21,000 students. We are part of the California  
14 State University system with 23 campuses with more  
15 than 30,000 students, the largest in the world.  
16 Most of those institutions of course are HSIs.

17 I did some investigation of this  
18 authorization and we looked at what are the  
19 Hispanic schools and colleges, universities,  
20 colleges of agriculture. And when we went to the  
21 list there are very few actual universities and  
22 colleges, four years, non Land Grant that offer  
23 degrees in agriculture. I only found four: Two  
24 in California, two in Texas. The two in  
25 California are Fresno State and Cal Poly Pomona.

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1 We represent a very large contingency of  
2 California, both Fresno State and Cal Poly Pomona,  
3 of about 3,000 students. These students are in  
4 degree programs in agriculture, both undergraduate  
5 and graduate programs.

6 I don't want to go through the list of  
7 them, but they're in very traditional areas of  
8 agriculture such as animal science, plant science,  
9 human nutrition, food science, and so forth.

10 We provide the state of California a lot  
11 of the graduates that go into the area of  
12 agriculture.

13 When we look at the definition of the  
14 HSACU you really define that to exclude a lot of  
15 HSIs and I don't think that's right; however, I  
16 think it's important that when you do the  
17 appropriations and you look at that carefully  
18 we're going to have to really understand that USDA  
19 has to meet standards. These standards deal with  
20 merit, quality, and relevance.

21 And so, you know, this is an opportunity  
22 for our institution to compete with Land Grant  
23 institutions in the appropriated area, and this is  
24 really historic because it hasn't been done in a  
25 long time.

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1 These are exciting times for our  
2 institution. We look forward to it. We look  
3 forward to partnering because there's so few  
4 institutions that are really prepared for this  
5 right now; again only four campuses in the entire  
6 state.

7 We're looking to partnering with  
8 community colleges and other institutions that are  
9 non Land Grant to help us with these programs. We  
10 can't do it ourselves so I welcome the  
11 opportunity.

12 When you look at Cal Poly Pomona's  
13 capacity, you know, we have a very large campus,  
14 second largest in the CSU system, California State

15 University system, about 2,000 acres of dedicated  
16 farmland in southern California, which is really  
17 very unusual. You think about Southern California  
18 being a megalopolis with 19 million people.

19 We are an island of agriculture down  
20 there. We represent really the southern outpost  
21 if you will of agriculture, the No. 1 agricultural  
22 state in the union, a \$34 billion industry.

23 We welcome the challenge that this  
24 authorization provides us and look forward to  
25 really providing what USDA is looking for: A

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1 partner that can really provide relevant research,  
2 meritorious research and relevant research, just  
3 really put it together with other partners. I  
4 think this is a tremendous historical moment for  
5 the HSI communities to be able to have  
6 representation this way.

7 Again I want to thank the USDA for  
8 hearing us out. It's a daunting task to define  
9 what an HSACU is. I wish you well in this.

10 Again you're willing to bring in everyone  
11 you can into this thing but again I know you have  
12 to maintain your standards.

13 So thank you very much.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. SPURLING: Dr. Charles Boyer from  
16 California State University Fresno.

17 DR. BOYER: Good afternoon. It's a  
18 pleasure to be here.

19 I'd like to add a little bit what my

20 colleague from Cal Poly Pomona said. Wherever we  
21 go we need to be credible, we need to be  
22 accountable, and I hope in five years we'll be  
23 able to deliver impact. So I think we all have to  
24 commit to that as this moves forward; maybe  
25 underpromise and overdeliver.

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1 I do want to say, you know, a lot of you  
2 have been trying to make a case -- and I think a  
3 very good case for your colleges and universities  
4 for being part of this program.

5 But at CSU Fresno we're a little  
6 different. We're surrounded by the richest  
7 farmland in the country. The farmgate value in  
8 the county of Fresno approaches \$5 billion every  
9 year. That's with a B. That means our farmgate  
10 value is greater than usually 20 plus states in  
11 the country. So we're in the middle of  
12 agriculture and obviously we're a very important  
13 component of that.

14 However the most important thing we do  
15 is our students. We have a few of them here  
16 including one of them who's a recent graduate  
17 working for the USDA. That's the way we really  
18 contribute to the future.

19 I'd like to respond to what I think  
20 should be some of the things that are considered.  
21 I do think it's important that we adhere to a  
22 requirement for a degree program, either  
23 Associates or Bachelor's degree. I think that's  
24 important to our credibility. I think that's what

25 we're talking about.

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1 Today's featured speaker at the luncheon  
2 from Lumina talked about the emphasis on  
3 increasing the number of graduates at the  
4 Associate and Bachelor level. That's what we  
5 ought to be about is creating degrees and creating  
6 that trained work force for the future.

7 In California I think we would have  
8 several four-year and two-year schools qualified  
9 under that. We have a history of partnering, a  
10 history of competing for HSI education grants.  
11 And so I think we would be an effective part of  
12 that.

13 But the key I think question today is  
14 really what areas are we going to include in this.  
15 And part of the Farm Bill, for those of who you  
16 may not be aware, is some reorganization of CSREES  
17 and the creation of a research, education, and  
18 extension office. This office will have six  
19 divisions.

20 And I guess I would argue -- I'm going to  
21 go through these divisions with you. I would  
22 argue that most of you who spoke today would be  
23 included under those divisions if we use those as  
24 our standard for what it might take to qualify.

25 The first is renewable energy, natural

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1 resources, and environments.

2 Second is food safety, nutrition, and  
3 health.

4           Third is plant health, plant production,  
5 plant products.

6           Fourth, animal health, animal production,  
7 and animal products.

8           The fifth is agriculture systems and  
9 technology.

10          The sixth is agriculture economics in the  
11 rural community.

12          I think most of you who spoke this  
13 afternoon will probably find a place for your  
14 programs within those six categories.

15          In addition the new Farm Bill mandated  
16 three programs with funding. One of these is for  
17 specialty crops, the second is for organic  
18 agriculture, and the third is for beginning  
19 farmers and ranchers.

20          I would argue with specialty crops and  
21 organic agriculture. We heard about organic  
22 agriculture with several people speaking on that  
23 today.

24          If you look at specialty crops the key  
25 areas where we have Hispanic-Serving Institutions

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1 are Florida, Texas, California, and Arizona. And  
2 all of those are key states for the production of  
3 specialty crops so I think we can have impact in  
4 those areas and with our institutions in those  
5 regions.

6          Finally the research, education, and  
7 extension office is in the process of developing a  
8 roadmap for agriculture research, education, and

9 extension. I think we need to work hard to align  
10 who we are and what we're doing with that roadmap.  
11 We need to be a player; we need to be a partner.

12 I would like to close by speaking to one  
13 provision that hasn't been spoken to. That is, we  
14 as HSIs now will have representation on the  
15 national agriculture research, education --  
16 extension, education, and economics advisory  
17 board.

18 This is a relatively small advisory board  
19 that informs the national agriculture priorities.  
20 I think it's important that whoever HACU and HSIs  
21 go forward with nominating for this position that  
22 we have somebody who can build coalitions and  
23 build partnerships so that we can be effective in  
24 the future in working with the other partners who  
25 are part of the larger agriculture family.

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1 So I think if we continue to look on  
2 credibility, accountability, and impact, we will  
3 be successful and we will be able to bring new  
4 institutions into the fold in the future.

5 Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. SPURLING: Next up is Dr. Sandy  
8 Smith, Global Learning Semester.

9 DR. SMITH: I want to thank you for the  
10 opportunity for all of us to have a chance to  
11 speak to this topic.

12 I will say that I'm from Global Learning  
13 Semesters. I represent a partnership with HACU



14 and all of the HACU institutions in  
15 internationalizing student experiences. This is  
16 definitely a priority for us in capacity building,  
17 finding the underrepresented areas, academic areas  
18 of education that are not being internationalized,  
19 and obviously agricultural education is one of  
20 those areas for most schools, but especially for  
21 smaller schools.

22           So I would like to definitely thank USDA  
23 because they do have a priority in  
24 internationalizing agricultural education,  
25 research, and outreach.

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1           But I get many requests from Land Grant  
2 institutions looking at opportunities for  
3 partnering with other institutions to utilize the  
4 grants that they have received from USDA. And I  
5 very often will recommend that they look at HSIs  
6 and HACU member institutions to partner in those  
7 areas.

8           So I would like to definitely advocate  
9 for including the Associate degree level  
10 institutions in this opportunity for the fact that  
11 I have dealt with a lot of Land Grant institutions  
12 that already have access to so many more areas of  
13 funding and that the smaller schools don't as  
14 often have that opportunity.

15           For the Hispanic-Serving Institutions,  
16 one of the fastest growing areas of education that  
17 I see, this is a very important area for the  
18 Associate level schools to be included in having

19 the opportunity to have access to these funds.

20 And also I would like to also, because of  
21 my background in internationalizing education, is  
22 to advocate not only for the USDA, which I know  
23 already does with Land Grant institutions in  
24 internationalizing their education, but advocating  
25 also in this area with HSIs and with the

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1 institutions themselves to use this as an  
2 opportunity to acknowledge and hopefully utilize  
3 funding for internationalizing their agricultural  
4 education, research, and outreach. So that's what  
5 I'd like to share.

6 Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. SPURLING: Okay. Now I'd like to  
9 introduce Dr. Antonio Flores, the President and  
10 CEO of the HACU.

11 Dr. Flores.

12 DR. FLORES: Thank you. Good afternoon.  
13 My name is Antonio Flores, President and CEO of  
14 the Hispanic Association of Colleges and  
15 Universities also known as HACU.

16 HACU is a national higher education  
17 association representing over 450 colleges and  
18 universities, and the only national organization  
19 that represents the interests of Hispanic-Serving  
20 Institutions or HSIs, which are those colleges and  
21 universities that have a minimum of 25 percent  
22 Hispanic undergraduate enrollment.

23 I'm here today to offer preliminary

24 suggestions to the United States Department of  
25 Agriculture, USDA, on the development of

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1 regulations to define and certify certain  
2 institutions as Hispanic-Serving Agriculture  
3 College and Universities, HSACUs, as well as  
4 regulations for the five new programs created for  
5 HSACUs under the recently passed Farm Bill  
6 legislation.

7           Let me first express my appreciation to  
8 the Cooperative State Research and Extension  
9 Service, CSREES, of the USDA for reaching out to  
10 the HSI community, HACU, and our membership to  
11 host this stakeholders meeting at our annual  
12 conference in Denver, Colorado.

13           This is an incredible and important piece  
14 of legislation for HSIs and it's critical to have  
15 a venue where the HSI community is able to provide  
16 the regulations that will govern these five  
17 programs for HSACUs.

18           I also want to express appreciation to  
19 all of those members of Congress that were  
20 instrumental in the creation of these new HSI  
21 provisions in the Farm Bill.

22           The first suggestion that we would like  
23 to provide in the development of regulations for  
24 the new offer of HSACUs is that a fair and  
25 equitable methodology is developed to ensure that

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1 both two- and four-year HSI institutions are

2 equitably represented in this offer.

3           Also it's important that all regions of  
4 the country that have large Hispanic populations  
5 and HSIs are able to host HSACUs both today and in  
6 the future.

7           Secondly we ask that attention be paid to  
8 clearly define and interpret the meaning of, in  
9 quote, agriculture and related fields, end of  
10 quote, so that the HSACUs offer is as inclusive as  
11 possible but also reflective of the spirit and  
12 letter of the law.

13           We are conscious of the delicate  
14 balancing act that the USDA is trying to walk for  
15 if all the HSIs, all of the HSIs are allowed to  
16 apply for this these funds this would diminish and  
17 dilute the impact of these grants.

18           Moreover we must also be conscious of the  
19 need to stay within the spirit of these  
20 legislations to ensure that there's a true  
21 connection between this funding opportunity and  
22 the need to make sure that these funds will expand  
23 the number of Hispanics in agriculture-related  
24 careers and strengthen the US agriculture  
25 community.

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1           We understand that there may be over  
2 80 HSIs that will be immediately eligible for  
3 these funding opportunities regardless of the  
4 final interpretation of the, in quote, agriculture  
5 and related fields, end quote, in the legislation.

6           We also know that our colleges and

7 universities will continue to develop as  
8 institutions and could easily become effective  
9 partners with the USDA and the US agriculture  
10 community if provided the funding and guidance so  
11 that we do not want to limit from the outset the  
12 number of institutions that would be deemed to be  
13 an HSACU.

14           We must make sure that we do not create  
15 haves and have nots for these funding  
16 opportunities; therefore we would like to propose  
17 that the USDA draft a specific criteria based on  
18 USDA's current and future strategy goals that HSIs  
19 would need to move from them to the consideration  
20 to be considered as HSACUs and become eligible for  
21 these funding opportunities. These draft criteria  
22 should be effectively deliberated with  
23 stakeholders.

24           HACU looks forward to working with the  
25 USDA in this process. In doing so we should

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1 aspire to stay true to the spirit of the  
2 legislation and develop programs that will  
3 continue to expand the capacity for HSIs, increase  
4 the number of Hispanics in agriculture-related  
5 fields, and also ensure that the institutions will  
6 strengthen the US agriculture community.

7           Such a process will also provide the  
8 clear roadmap that HSIs will need to follow to  
9 become an HSACU.

10           These are HACU's initial thoughts on the  
11 creation of the HACU offer of institutions;

12 however, there are several other issues to  
13 consider. And HACU as an association is eager to  
14 hear from the HSIs to ensure that this is an  
15 inclusive process.

16 HACU encourages HSIs to carefully  
17 consider the following questions in the  
18 development of rules and regulations for  
19 implementing the five new programs for HSACUs.

20 One, consideration of matching fund  
21 requirements in any of the grants to ensure buy-in  
22 on the purpose for the program.

23 No. 2, require demographic information  
24 for institutions eligible to be certified as an  
25 HSACU.

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1 Three, consideration of the typical grant  
2 period of three years for the competitive grants.  
3 Currently USDA HSI Title 7 grants are for three  
4 years. Are three years sufficient time for  
5 research and development for those grants?

6 No. 4, what about the institutional  
7 capacity building grant program which will provide  
8 funding for HACU. Should they be a one-time grant  
9 to allow more HSACUs to receive grants?

10 No. 5, in order to ensure that community  
11 colleges compared to four-year institutions  
12 receive a fair number of these grants should  
13 community colleges be given additional support to  
14 guarantee equitable opportunity in grant  
15 competitions?

16 No. 6, should the rule-making process for

17 distribution of grants give extra weight to  
18 transfer and articulation agreements between two-  
19 and four-year institutions?

20 No. 7, should HSACUs be allowed or  
21 encouraged to develop articulation programs with  
22 Hispanic-Serving school districts and their  
23 service areas?

24 These are important questions that HSI's  
25 need to consider and provide guidance to the USDA

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1 in this rule-making processes.

2 Please note I will be submitting  
3 additional written recommendations based on the  
4 testimony that is presented here today, additional  
5 comments that we may receive from the HSI  
6 community, and input from the HACU governing board  
7 before the October 27, 2008 deadline.

8 On behalf of HACU I want to thank the  
9 secretary of the USDA as well as the administrator  
10 of CSREES for the opportunity to present testimony  
11 today at this important state meeting.

12 Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. SPURLING: I can't read my writing.  
15 Looks like Jim Herrell.

16 MR. HERRELL: I'm supposed to follow  
17 that?

18 My name is Jim Herrell. I'm the  
19 Associate Vice President of Otero Junior College,  
20 in La Ciudad La Junta in southeastern Colorado.

21 I was going to tell you that I lost a

22 copy of my speech, and it sounded remarkably like  
23 the speech you just heard.

24 I would want to say one thing about small  
25 Hispanic-Serving Institutions. We have 1,200 FTE

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1 at our little HSI in southeastern Colorado. We  
2 have articulation agreements between our four-year  
3 schools and our school and where the farmers and  
4 ranchers and their children actually go to school.

5 I would like the Department of  
6 Agriculture -- and thank you for this  
7 opportunity -- to carefully consider location,  
8 location, location; that sometimes the access to  
9 higher education is most assuredly predicated on  
10 where one lives and one's capacity to be mobile.

11 One of the categories that I hope we  
12 celebrate is we certainly, we want people of  
13 agriculture to have an opportunity to go to  
14 school. And those people who have made a  
15 commitment to stay in rural America and be part of  
16 rural America and support America and the world by  
17 growing its food should have access to these  
18 funds.

19 We'll qualify, but thank you so much for  
20 this wonderful opportunity. And we'll still be in  
21 rural America and growing your food. And if  
22 you'll send a few things our way it will enhance  
23 our capacity to educate the children of rural  
24 America and its people.

25 Thank you very much.

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1 (Applause.)

2 MR. SPURLING: Paul Gutierrez, Mexico  
3 State.

4 MR. GUTIERREZ: Good afternoon. My name  
5 is Paul Gutierrez, New Mexico State University.

6 I want to preface my remarks by saying I  
7 come here as an Hispanic-Serving Higher Education  
8 and not necessarily as Hispanic-Serving  
9 Institution, and I think you understand the  
10 prefatory remark.

11 Hispanic-Serving Agriculture Colleges and  
12 Universities -- and again I underline the word  
13 "serving." I made some notes here and it's  
14 entitled, The Case of the Land Grant University.

15 I spent my entire career in Land Grant  
16 universities of Colorado State, Washington State,  
17 and now New Mexico State. As remarked earlier  
18 there's not a whole lot of Hispanic-Serving Land  
19 Grant universities in the country, which of course  
20 is most of the resources of the Extension Service  
21 and many other resources.

22 So when I look at the capacity in terms  
23 of the language of the Farm Bill the capacity  
24 building and Hispanic-Serving Agriculture Colleges  
25 and Universities versus the capacity to serve the

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1 community I think we really do have to consider  
2 that.

3 I think my colleague just alluded to that  
4 as well. But if you look at the demographics of  
5 faculty and the colleges of agriculture, all Land

6 Grant universities across the United States, the  
7 Extension Service included where most of my, as I  
8 said, my professional career working for the  
9 Cooperative Extension Service -- up until a few  
10 months ago I was the Director of Extension in New  
11 Mexico.

12           Again I think if you look at the  
13 demographics of professional staff in the  
14 extension across the country the last figures I  
15 saw in 2004, 83 percent were non Hispanic, non-  
16 Native American, non Asian professional staff;  
17 Caucasian primarily.

18           Of course that doesn't reflect the  
19 demographics of our country and certainly not many  
20 of the communities. And I don't know the  
21 demographics of faculty, teaching faculty in  
22 colleges of agriculture. But I know in my  
23 experience most of the universities I've served at  
24 that this is not a highly diverse population,  
25 mixed population. Again, keep that in mind

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1 because I think it's important when we talk about  
2 capacity building and capacity to serve.

3           The other issue or thing I just wanted to  
4 briefly talk about is in terms of the subject  
5 matter in the competitive grants area. In  
6 serving, talking about serving agriculture,  
7 Hispanic communities in rural America, rural New  
8 Mexico, many of the socioeconomic challenges faced  
9 by rural Hispanic and Native Americans in  
10 agriculture transcend the boundaries of the

11 college of agriculture but yet it's all important.

12 I mean, you have to have a lot of success  
13 in a lot of areas to have the successful community  
14 economic development effort in agriculture. I  
15 think it's important that we don't just focus on  
16 the areas of agriculture in and of itself.

17 The agriculture family community, many of  
18 the agriculture producers that we're thinking of,  
19 at least in New Mexico, are small farms by  
20 definition of the federal government which means  
21 they have probably a job in town, or maybe two or  
22 three, to maintain their agriculture operations.  
23 So economic community development operations are  
24 important and closely tied to the agriculture  
25 community and certainly in the rural community in

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1 New Mexico.

2 It isn't large scale agriculture like  
3 some of the agriculture in California, but I think  
4 what's important to keep in mind is that don't  
5 limit that to competitive areas. I think you have  
6 to look at the whole local growing system,  
7 socioeconomic, and the environmental system.

8 A few of the recommendations I thought  
9 of, if we look at the language of the Farm Bill --  
10 and I understand that the language of the Farm  
11 Bill was greatly influenced by many, by a very  
12 strong following of agriculture Land Grant  
13 institutions. And I know many of my colleagues  
14 were involved in advocating for the language that  
15 certainly exists currently in the Farm Bill.

16 But I think we should have more focus on  
17 the needs of the rural Hispanic and Native  
18 American communities and not on the traditional  
19 institutional labels that tend to direct use of  
20 the resources.

21 In doing so I think we should focus on  
22 the institutional strengths to serve the research  
23 and educational needs, and then again, so if we  
24 think about the institutional strengths I think  
25 many of our HSI colleges may not have strong

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1 agricultural research programs but do have the  
2 capacity to serve those Hispanic communities; they  
3 do have the capacity and the social capital trust  
4 and whatnot to work with these communities.

5 So capacity of the Land Grants are not  
6 just HSI Land Grants but Land Grants across the  
7 entire country. Again we need to look at the  
8 demographics of where are the Hispanic agriculture  
9 communities across the US? They're not  
10 necessarily held up against or backed up to Land  
11 Grant or an institution that has agricultural  
12 programs such as HSIs but they may be close to  
13 some of our best research and teaching  
14 institutions that are Land Grants that do  
15 agriculture.

16 So I think we should look at some  
17 language that suggests, that focus on HSI's  
18 ability to partner with other institutions,  
19 capacity to partner with other institutions  
20 including other Land Grant colleges and

21 universities across the country to serve the needs  
22 of the institution.

23           So again the competitive nature wouldn't  
24 be about spreading it to every institution that  
25 wanted to have a piece of the pie; it's really

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1 saying, Okay, how about where is the --  
2 demonstrate the capacity to serve as well as the  
3 capacity to do agriculture.

4           And that gives those HSIs that have a lot  
5 of interest in partnering with other institutions  
6 that have the capacity to provide the content, and  
7 the HSIs, that have the capacity to provide the  
8 context it's a win-win for the community and right  
9 now it's a win for the institution, you know, a  
10 win for the institutions that are going to have to  
11 fit within that narrowly labeled box to compete  
12 for the funds. It doesn't necessarily mean that  
13 those in a big way benefit the Hispanic community  
14 of agriculture, or Native Americans in this case.

15           I think we need to look again at how  
16 we're a little more creative in how we define the  
17 capacity to serve in terms of both the content and  
18 the context. That would be my recommendation.

19           (Applause.)

20           MR. SPURLING: Next is Frank Ureno, Texas  
21 A&M.

22           MR. URENO: Good afternoon, everyone. My  
23 name is Frank Ureno. I'm with Texas A&M  
24 University Kingsville.

25           I'm here today representing my new

1 President Steve Tallant, who's actually been on  
2 the job 12 days.

3 It is an honor to be here addressing you  
4 and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you  
5 for listening to us today.

6 It has been a very long road getting to  
7 this point. It's exciting that we are able to be  
8 here today providing input on this historic and  
9 important program. We appreciate USDA CSREES for  
10 soliciting input from us on how to identify and  
11 certify the institution eligibility of HSACU.

12 The mission of my institution, Texas A&M  
13 University Kingsville, as most of us that are here  
14 today, can be summarized probably as one that  
15 provides excellent educational opportunities to  
16 improve the lives of people in our rural  
17 agriculture communities.

18 The intent of the funds under the five  
19 new programs is to improve the lives of those  
20 associated with the Hispanic agriculture  
21 communities. Speaking from my geographic area  
22 most of these areas are underserved and defined as  
23 at risk.

24 We help students and families in these  
25 areas develop the skill sets needed so they can

1 also participate in the American dream.

2 We also realize these funds are limited.

3 With this in mind we would like to suggest that we

4 focus the money to where it would provide the  
5 greatest good.

6 For an institution to be eligible for  
7 this program it should currently be offering an  
8 accredited degree program in agriculture. There  
9 are numerous methods that can be used to determine  
10 this, but the most appropriate would be to define  
11 the qualified schools as those with accredited  
12 programs in agriculture defined by the  
13 classification of instructional programs  
14 originally developed by the US Department of  
15 Education.

16 These codes are used nationwide, and  
17 provide a standard approach to define our  
18 programs. Agriculture programs are in the  
19 01 series. This would focus the limited funds to  
20 those programs that are working with the students  
21 and regions that are dealing with Hispanic  
22 agricultural, and will continue to provide help to  
23 these communities.

24 We would like to see it restricted to  
25 HSACU institutions who offer a degree that leads

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1 to a Baccalaureate degree either as a standalone  
2 or as a collaboration with a two-year HSACU  
3 program.

4 It has been shown the value of a  
5 Baccalaureate degree dramatically helps those that  
6 achieve this level of education. If we adopt this  
7 model you would allow HSACU students to set the  
8 bar higher and not stop at the Associate degree

9 level.

10 We realize this is an important decision.

11 But we must make one that allows us to move  
12 forward with the greatest chance to achieve  
13 success and benefit the Hispanic agriculture  
14 communities.

15 Thank you for your time.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. SPURLING: Lidia Tuttle, Florida  
18 International University.

19 DR. TUTTLE: I'm Dr. Lidia Tuttle,  
20 Associate Vice President for undergraduate  
21 education at Florida International University, the  
22 only public research university in southern  
23 Florida.

24 My friends from a sister institution in  
25 Miami and my colleague from Florida International

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1 University have made a strong case for an  
2 inclusive definition of the phrase, Agricultural  
3 related field. I am pleased to add my brief  
4 comments. Thank you for the opportunity.

5 I urge you to consider the important role  
6 of urban HSIs that don't have a traditional  
7 agriculture program but offer numerous programs in  
8 related fields from water resource management,  
9 environmental studies, nutrition and its  
10 relationship to health, including obesity in  
11 children leading to diabetes and heart disease, as  
12 well as nutrition and poverty.

13 Thank you.



14 (Applause.)

15 MR. SPURLING: Dr. Jose Rivera from the  
16 Universidad del Sagrado Corazon, Puerto Rico.

17 DR. RIVERA: Good afternoon. My name is  
18 Jose Rivera. I'm the president of Sacred Heart  
19 University and also a member of the board of HACU.  
20 My comments only refer to my institution.

21 The roots of Universidad del Sagrado  
22 Corazon, Sacred Heart University, go to 1880 when  
23 it was established as a women's school and evolved  
24 to become a college and continue on to graduate  
25 programs.

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1 We are historically Hispanic, selective,  
2 comprehensive, affordable institution offering  
3 Associates, Bachelor's, Certificate, and Master's  
4 degrees in arts and science fields such as  
5 business, education, communication, social  
6 sciences, natural sciences, and the humanities.

7 We offer undergraduate degrees to  
8 4,600 students and 1,000 graduate students. We  
9 offer courses in ecotourism, water quality  
10 research, biotechnology, nutrition, food  
11 management and marketing, and international  
12 business, and see ourselves also in the function  
13 as a preparatory institution.

14 The Department of Agriculture has now a  
15 unique opportunity to be as innovative and  
16 visionary as when it created the Land Grant  
17 colleges and universities.

18 HSI's are unique as, they are as unique as

19 they are decisive to the future economic and  
20 social development of this country because of our  
21 demographics. The specification as HSACU is an  
22 opportunity to focus attention and drive HSIs to  
23 the need in the broad field of food, agriculture,  
24 conservation, and energy areas.

25 I would like to make a statement to the  
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1 issue of defining agriculture-related fields.  
2 There's no question to the fact that HSIs are very  
3 diverse and serve the majority of Hispanic  
4 students. I also understand that we're dealing  
5 somehow with an issue of funding but we should try  
6 to separate the issue of funding from the  
7 fundamental concepts that we are ready to define.

8 We are witnessing a major transformation  
9 in the job market and job creation in the creation  
10 of fields, in areas that bridge disciplines that  
11 were not as apparent or as linked, apparently  
12 linked as they are and we're seeing now where the  
13 focus is on more interdisciplinary and multi  
14 disciplinary education and initiatives.

15 Food, water conservation, conservation in  
16 general, nutrition, and energy are basic  
17 fundamental issues for the survival of society,  
18 and when we see all the disciplines that are  
19 needed in terms of those major issues -- and again  
20 you see, we see through the eyes of traditional  
21 fields, supported traditionally again by the  
22 Department of Agriculture, we need to see if this  
23 is the direction we want to maintain ourselves or

24 if we want to move forward.

25 I seek to propose to prevent the

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1 development of limited or limiting definition of  
2 the term "agriculture-related fields."

3 Regulations leave these definitions fairly open to  
4 all academic disciplines for HSIs in the field of  
5 business, communication, natural sciences, social  
6 sciences, and education.

7 For purposes of the regulation that will  
8 guide the area of the request for proposals under  
9 the law the Department of Agriculture should  
10 specify clearly their goals, objectives, needs,  
11 priorities, and outcomes that they expect from the  
12 Hispanic-Serving Agriculture Colleges and  
13 Universities to address in these five new  
14 programs, and then evaluate the proposals needed  
15 by HSIs based on the merits of their projects and  
16 their abilities to effectively and efficiently  
17 meet the goals, needs, and priorities of the  
18 Department.

19 Almost every field of study in an HSI can  
20 contribute to the growth, development, and  
21 competitiveness of our national agriculture, our  
22 food management and marketing, our nutritional  
23 efforts, our conservation, and energy efforts.

24 In addition I would like to suggest that  
25 priority be given to Hispanic-Serving Agriculture

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1 Colleges and Universities both with two-year and  
2 four-year programs to establish collaborative

3 initiatives such as joint degrees, articulation  
4 agreements, and other such projects with current  
5 Land Grant institutions.

6           Finally I'd like to stress that a clear  
7 distinction needs to be made in this two-year and  
8 four-year concept so that we recognize that there  
9 are many HSI four-year institutions that's have  
10 two-year programs that are made to articulate with  
11 other four-year institutions because if we don't  
12 want to offer everything to everybody, and  
13 recognize strengths, it is best if we, even if we  
14 provide four-year programs, some of our programs  
15 link to other four-year institutions.

16           We found a problem in the recent same  
17 program. That was a special appropriation for  
18 HSIs where the definition was strictly interpreted  
19 as community colleges and senior colleges, and  
20 that left out the possibility for articulation  
21 projects between four-year institutions having  
22 two-year transfer programs and other four-year  
23 institutions, and what that lead to is that  
24 everybody tries to offer everything of low  
25 quality. I think we have to promote quality.

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1           I know you will take these  
2 recommendations into account as you develop the  
3 regulations. Again I really hope and dream that  
4 you will be able to use this opportunity to be, as  
5 I said before, as creative as the nation was when  
6 it created the Land Grant colleges and  
7 universities.

8 Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. SPURLING: Stephen Reed, California  
11 State, Monterey Bay.

12 MR. REED: I'd like to thank you again  
13 for taking this opportunity to allow us to present  
14 our sides after reviewing the Farm Bill.

15 I'm Stephen Reed, Associate Vice  
16 President Cal State Monterey Bay.

17 We're a young institution. We were  
18 founded in 1995 in a property adjoining the  
19 Monterey Bay closure of Fort Ord. As a young  
20 institution, small and developing and growing, we  
21 have fewer than 4,500 students at this point but  
22 we are growing.

23 Our neighbors include some of the largest  
24 and most productive specialty crop growers in the  
25 United States. The Salinas Valley is known as the

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1 salad bowl of America. We grow leafy greens,  
2 lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, which I don't eat,  
3 artichokes, strawberries, which I do eat, and we  
4 have about 70 wineries in our vicinity, which I do  
5 avail myself of. And I would invite you all to  
6 come visit.

7 Our faculty in the watershed sciences are  
8 working with the AG industry in water conservation  
9 techniques, food safety, AG technology,  
10 agribusiness, and a variety of other fields.

11 We've been an HSI and proud to be a  
12 member of HACU since our founding in 1995. We've

13 been very successful with our faculty working in  
14 attracting federal grants from NSF, NASA, NOAA,  
15 Department of Energy and other federal agencies,  
16 and less so with the Department of Agriculture.

17           As a young institution I think most of  
18 you would understand we don't now have a full-  
19 fledged school of agriculture with accredited  
20 degree programs in AG and AG related fields  
21 despite the fact that our AG industry is working  
22 closely with us with a desire we eventually get to  
23 that point. That industry is a \$3.2 billion with  
24 a B industry in the Monterey area that again is  
25 coastal dependent. We pride ourselves in being in

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1 the middle of this group of AG industry leaders  
2 for this country.

3           We have a sentiment about the bill, which  
4 echoes part of the speakers that have spoken  
5 before and in opposition to some of the other  
6 speakers that have spoken before, which is to say  
7 that the definition of Hispanic-Serving  
8 Agriculture Colleges and Universities should  
9 include a category for small or emerging HSIs and  
10 HCACUs, which recognize that these newer, smaller  
11 institutions are doing considerable valuable work  
12 in agriculture related fields.

13           Their coursework would normally qualify  
14 for Farm Bill support if it weren't for the  
15 simple lack of formal AG school or accredited  
16 degree program that we measure by.

17           The case in point, I'd like to bring to

18 your attention the fact that right now our campus  
19 has initiated a new agribusiness management  
20 concentration. We call it a concentration. It  
21 would normally exceed the kind of programmatic  
22 definition that would be called a minor. It's  
23 50 plus units in agribusiness and management.

24 We are planning similar concentrations  
25 additionally in soils and food safety in

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1 cooperation again with community colleges in our  
2 region and the agriculture industry.

3 These are exactly the kinds of programs  
4 we would like to see qualify because it's going to  
5 be a long time I suspect before our campus has an  
6 opportunity to have a full-fledged, be a school of  
7 agriculture or a series of accredited major  
8 programs.

9 So that is the essence of the  
10 recommendations that our faculty and campus  
11 President Dr. Diane Harrison, who is with us  
12 today, has asked me to try to present to you.

13 I want to thank you again for allowing me  
14 the opportunity to do that.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. SPURLING: Maria Alvarez, El Paso  
17 Community.

18 MS. ALVAREZ: Good afternoon, everyone.  
19 And thank you for this opportunity.

20 I want to join my colleagues from  
21 community colleges in respectfully requesting that  
22 two-year institutions be included in these

23 programs.

24 I don't have a prepared speech. But I  
25 did give a presentation about an hour ago on the

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1 importance of community colleges in the education  
2 of minority students in science. So I thought it  
3 may be appropriate to share some of the data with  
4 this group.

5 Let me just start by telling you, giving  
6 you some statistics. Two-year community colleges,  
7 there's about over a thousand fully accredited  
8 community colleges in the United States. This  
9 enrolls about ten million students, about  
10 basically 44 percent of all US undergraduates, and  
11 45 percent of first-time freshmen.

12 Also in terms of minority and  
13 underrepresented students community colleges  
14 enroll more than half of all minorities and  
15 disadvantaged students, and 58 percent of female  
16 undergraduates are enrolled in community college.

17 This is a group of talented students  
18 that, with the appropriate support and guidance,  
19 can very easily enter into fields that are  
20 supported by the USDA and also into the Ph.D.  
21 pipeline.

22 We have in El Paso Community College been  
23 doing this for a few years, and I wanted to share  
24 some of our success stories as well.

25 Unfortunately community colleges have not

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1 received the same level funding as four-year  
2 institutions.

3 Some of the community college advantages  
4 are for example that you have a smaller class size  
5 at the freshmen and sophomore level.

6 When I was teaching at the university my  
7 freshman biology class was 150, 200 students. At  
8 the community college my typical size is  
9 22, 24, so there's a lot more personal attention.

10 There's a flexible class schedule which  
11 facilitates employment, which many of our  
12 underrepresented students need.

13 Also it's extremely affordable. If you  
14 look at the tuition of a two-year college versus a  
15 four-year institution it's about a third. In  
16 terms of access to higher education, community  
17 college represents a very important entrance  
18 points.

19 Now, let me tell you a little bit about  
20 the school that I work at, El Paso Community  
21 College. We are located on the US-Mexico border.  
22 And El Paso Community College has five campuses  
23 strategically located throughout the area.

24 We have been designated as the fastest  
25 growing community college; in other words the

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1 highest number of degrees, Associate degrees to  
2 Hispanics.

3 We hit a record enrollment in our credit  
4 courses of 25,000 a couple of years ago so we  
5 have, you know, a lot of students. Our student

6 enrollment mirrors the population with 85 percent  
7 Hispanic population, 62 percent female.

8           We have more than 130 programs of study.  
9 Many programs are technical two-year degrees, but  
10 we also offer the Associate of Science degree in  
11 biology, chemistry, and many fields that, even  
12 though are not exactly agriculture degrees are  
13 degrees that will put students into the track if  
14 we have the programs to support them.

15           Approximately 9,000 students at El Paso  
16 Community College enroll in fully transferable  
17 biology and chemistry courses so it gives you an  
18 idea the numbers of students that we have and that  
19 could potentially be funneled into USDA related  
20 fields.

21           We, you know, at El Paso Community  
22 College the faculty feels that research is very  
23 important in getting students excited about  
24 science. Getting the students involved in  
25 projects that are relevant to the community really

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1 spikes their interest to pursue a degree in  
2 science. We have been kind of pioneers in doing  
3 this for some years.

4           When I started some years ago we had  
5 normal infrastructure; you know, nothing to  
6 provide the students with opportunities to do  
7 hands-on, meaningful student projects.

8           And we got involved in writing a letter  
9 about grant applications. And were fortunate  
10 enough to receive a lot of training to be able to,

11 in only about eight years, secure about  
12 \$80 million in funding, which for a university may  
13 not be too much but for us, when you start at  
14 zero, was a big accomplishment.

15 Many of these programs are funded by the  
16 NIH and the International Science Foundation. And  
17 with these, you know, with these programs we've  
18 been able to get a lot of students involved in  
19 projects dealing with issues that are important to  
20 the community like water quality, contamination  
21 studies of soil.

22 We also have students working on projects  
23 at the Texas A&M University of Research Station in  
24 El Paso, Texas. Some of our students are  
25 stationed there and they conduct research on

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1 things like salinity, so agricultural related  
2 research.

3 We have two faculty members, one in the  
4 chemistry department doing research on fiber  
5 remediation, testing the use of native plants to  
6 remove toxic metal.

7 We have a faculty member who used to work  
8 at Texas A&M as a research professor, is now  
9 teaching with us. And she's an expert on  
10 salinity. So we have now, you know, been able to  
11 get students involved in a variety of projects.

12 Through the participation of these  
13 programs from NIH, from NSF, what we provide from  
14 the state to the students and the opportunity to  
15 do the research our students have been very very

16 successful, you know. Looking at the retention of  
17 the students it was 97 percent compared to the 64  
18 percent value for nonparticipants.

19           The transfer rate from a two-year to a  
20 four-year institution for the participants of  
21 these programs, which the main one is the RISE,  
22 Research for Scientific Enhancement, we have --  
23 the transfer rate was 94 percent compared to  
24 14 percent for nonparticipants. These programs,  
25 you know, really have an impact. The GPAs class

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1 averages are much higher for the participants than  
2 the nonparticipants.

3           And we have been able to get the students  
4 to national meetings to present. In the period of  
5 eight years they have presented 82 posters or oral  
6 presentations at national meetings and  
7 professional organizations and also student  
8 meetings. And they have retrieved 11 awards  
9 competing with students from four-year  
10 universities.

11           In a period of five years about a third  
12 of the students have graduated -- I mean, in the  
13 period of eight years -- I'm sorry -- about a  
14 third of the students have graduated with a  
15 Baccalaureate degree, and we also have four with a  
16 Master of Science, and six students enrolled in  
17 Ph.D. programs, and three have gone on to medical  
18 school.

19           I think it's an important accomplishment  
20 because it takes about six years for many minority

21 and disadvantaged students to receive a  
22 Baccalaureate, so these minority programs work for  
23 students in providing them with the support that  
24 they need.

25 I have many testimonials here that I

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1 presented of students saying how these programs,  
2 you know, made an impact on their ability to  
3 pursue a higher education.

4 I would like to respectfully request that  
5 community colleges be included in these  
6 initiatives and by doing this we may develop new  
7 programs that could have, you know, more impact on  
8 USDA related fields.

9 Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. SPURLING: Dr. Rudy Reyna and  
12 Dr. Ray Garza.

13 DR. REYNA: We're from the same  
14 institution. Two for the price of one.

15 Thank you for the opportunity. And we're  
16 with the University of Texas at San Antonio, which  
17 is an HSI and the fastest growing university in  
18 the state of Texas. This year we enrolled right  
19 around 9,000 students.

20 We are going to be reviewing, and because  
21 others at the university are going to be working  
22 with us to get additional input, we will be  
23 submitting formal written comments and so forth,  
24 but we wanted to, you know, we are also grant  
25 recipients of, you know, grants from CSREES in the

1 past and currently.

2 So we're here. We will be getting back  
3 with you on the comments as well.

4 Dr. Garza?

5 DR. GARZA: Thank you, Rudy.

6 Again, UTSA is one of the fastest growing  
7 HSI's in the state of Texas and perhaps in the  
8 Southwest. It's on the road to becoming a  
9 doctoral institution. For now we've got over a  
10 dozen doctoral programs in place.

11 But the point here is that no, we're not  
12 a Land Grant, we're not an AG school, but we have  
13 done a lot of related projects that have had a  
14 major impact.

15 I have been associated with two projects  
16 perhaps you've heard of, the Hispanic Leadership  
17 Program and Agricultural and Natural Resources.

18 This program received support -- I know  
19 it's a bad word -- yes, we got earmark support for  
20 it; one of the good earmarks.

21 But out of that came, out of it came a  
22 large number, over 20 Hispanic men and women who  
23 are now in positions of leadership throughout the  
24 USDA and in particular with the US Forest Service.

25 The other program from which I just

1 received funding is we're calling it the USDA FST  
2 program. It's a faculty student team program that  
3 is an innovative approach to building capacity at  
4 Hispanic-Serving Institutions by bringing faculty

5 members and two graduate students or two  
6 undergraduate students or a mix of the two and  
7 placing them in a state-of-the-art lab at a major  
8 university or lab for ten weeks and hopefully some  
9 of the on-hand training that they receive will  
10 translate into the development of competitive  
11 grant proposals that will be brought to their home  
12 institutions.

13           Again we will be providing more, you  
14 know, input in written form.

15           Thank you very much.

16           (Applause.)

17           MR. SPURLING: Rebecca Orozco from  
18 Cochi se.

19           MS. OROZCO: Good afternoon. I'm Rebecca  
20 Orozco. I'm the director of the Center for Life  
21 on Earth at Cochi se College located in  
22 southeastern Arizona right on the Mexican border.

23           We are an HSI, and one of the older HSI  
24 members. Our college is very small. It is a  
25 community college. We have no research but we

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1 feel we do have an agriculture program.

2           As Dr. Gonzales is probably familiar  
3 Cochi se County is an agriculture and ranching  
4 community. And most of our community members come  
5 from that background.

6           But as a community college in an  
7 impoverished area, Hispanic-Serving area, most of  
8 our students who come to us do not come looking  
9 for research careers. We hope to move them in

10 that direction.

11 But as many rural community colleges can  
12 attest 80 percent of our students who come to the  
13 community college come with some remedial need and  
14 so if we are going to prepare these students to  
15 continue onward to a university degree in  
16 agriculture then we need support to build the  
17 capacity in those students in science and  
18 technology to be able to continue on to do other  
19 work in our county in agriculture in areas other  
20 than the fields.

21 Thank you very much.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. SPURLING: That completes the list of  
24 speakers that signed up but we are here for  
25 another hour whether you speak or not.

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1 Anyone that has any comments to make as  
2 long as you clearly give your name -- Dr. Otto?

3 DR. OTTO: I don't have a presentation,  
4 but just as we are here for another hour we paid  
5 for all the food back there. Take care of it,  
6 please. Eat, drink.

7 MR. SPURLING: Why don't we take like a  
8 five-minute break so you can discuss amongst  
9 yourselves. Then if someone wants to come up and  
10 be on the record we will certainly -- you want to  
11 do it now or wait?

12 MS. MOJICA: Good afternoon. My name is  
13 Agnes Mojica. I am the Chancellor of  
14 Interamerican University at San German, Puerto



15 Rico. I'm a member of the Government Relations  
16 Committee, and I'm a member of the USDA Leadership  
17 group, agriculture leadership group that was a  
18 group formed almost 18 years ago.

19 And at the last meeting I was  
20 representing my president, Mr. Manuel J. Fernos,  
21 that is the president of the system of the  
22 Interamerican University.

23 At the meeting on Friday we were  
24 discussing what are the implication of specificity  
25 in terms of who should be an Agricultural

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1 Hispanic-Serving Institution. Among the concerns  
2 or issues that we were dealing with was the need  
3 to make sure that we don't make it so flexible  
4 that it's not really going to have an impact on  
5 what we want, which is to create the human  
6 resources to guarantee quality of life for this  
7 society.

8 Second, that we needed to make sure that  
9 there was some mentorship given by the Land Grant  
10 universities that have enjoyed that status for so  
11 long so that our new universities that are going  
12 to be going into this field because of the  
13 programs related to agriculture or areas related  
14 put in the Farm Bill could enjoy the benefit of  
15 the challenges that the Land Grants have  
16 experienced throughout these years plus the  
17 benefit of their experience.

18 Third, we also were considering -- or  
19 when I say "we" -- I recommended that we consider

20 in USDA the possibility of implementing by phases,  
21 that the definition could be that at this stage of  
22 the game these universities would qualify but  
23 within one, two, or three years these other  
24 universities could also qualify.

25 And that we were also going to look not

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1 by states but by regions because if we confine it  
2 to, say, three universities by state or five  
3 universities by state we could be discriminating  
4 and being unfair to other universities in areas  
5 where if you say five and there are not five  
6 what's going to happen to the difference in the  
7 number of institutions, but by areas, the  
8 northeastern part, et cetera.

9 We also were considering the importance  
10 of matching funds for two reasons: Commitment and  
11 greater funds to be distributed among ones that  
12 participate.

13 Third, that there could be also an  
14 analysis of who are the ones that have already in  
15 place full programs that are related and the ones  
16 that are developing, and maybe to consider giving  
17 them some help to finish developing those programs  
18 in their capacity giving goals for the faculty,  
19 for the resources, location and resources, and  
20 also they need to create HACU because like they  
21 are doing some of these centers for engineering  
22 institutes and things like that because when you  
23 create the HACU we can include both two-year  
24 colleges, four-year colleges, and those that have

25 related programs. It would help them, strengthen

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1 them. It would make beautiful partnerships.

2 And also not to forget the private  
3 agricultural sector. They have a voice that could  
4 be very important for us to be able to enrich  
5 whatever we're going to give our students.

6 As USDA HACU Leadership we are very very  
7 concerned on the need to increase the number of  
8 the graduates that go into your workforce.

9 When I first started eight years ago it  
10 was 1.6 percent. We were embarrassed to see that  
11 percentage. Then it went to 2.5 percent about  
12 12 years ago. And now it's at 6.1 percent and  
13 more stable but that should have to be doubled.

14 And in the next ten years almost  
15 50 percent of your workforce is going to retire.  
16 We have to prepare for that. And that will be a  
17 unique opportunity for these new created  
18 categories to be able to provide that human  
19 capital that could really enrich this nation.

20 So we as a team are going to submit some  
21 of these suggestions, but just I wanted to make  
22 sure that we considered them.

23 Thank you very much.

24 MR. SPURLING: Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

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1 MR. SPURLING: Anybody else?

2 Let's take our recess. Please eat some

3 of the cookies.

4 (Recess.)

5

6 WHEREUPON the proceedings were concluded  
7 at 6:30 PM on Sunday, October 12, 2008.

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

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5 I, Martha Loomis, Certified Shorthand

6 Reporter, appointed to record the within

7 proceedings on October 12, 2008, certify that the

8 foregoing is a true transcript of the proceedings  
9 had to the best of my ability to hear and  
10 understand

11 I further certify that I have no interest  
12 in the result of this matter.

13

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set  
15 my hand October 15, 2008.

16

17

18

19

20 Martha Loomis

21 Certified Shorthand Reporter

22

23

24 Proofread by D. Drake

25